

St Bede's Catholic College



Attendance Policy

Part 1 Policy:

1. Introduction

It is the aim of St Bede's Catholic College that pupils should enjoy learning, experience success and realise their full potential. Our Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the academic year, for whatever reason.

2. Aims

Our college aims to meet its obligations with regard to attendance by promoting good attendance; ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled and acting early to address patterns of absence.

This policy sets out our position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents¹ must follow to report their child absent from college. If the child is unable to attend college, the parent should inform the college of the reason on the first day of absence. If there is concern about a pupil's attendance for any reason, the parent will be contacted to discuss the matter, in the first instance.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory² school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We want our pupils to attend college every day, unless they are really not well enough to. We believe that children who attend college regularly are more likely to feel settled, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our pupils to enjoy college, grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality is essential in the workplace and children who are used to attending college on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the attendance expectations in the workplace.

In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school", therefore if an absence is not authorised by the college, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

We will do all we can to encourage our pupils to attend. We will also make the best provision we can for any pupil who needs additional support in college or who is prevented from attending college, due to a medical condition.

We believe that one of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards education. To this end, we strive to make our college a happy and rewarding experience for all children, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents.

¹ Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.

² A child becomes of 'compulsory school age' on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday and ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of Year 11.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the college community
- Raise our pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Provide support, advice and guidelines to parents, pupils and staff
- Work in partnership with parents
- Celebrate and reward good attendance and punctuality

Effects of non-attendance

The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days absence can result in children missing a significant number of lessons.

Attendance during college year	Days lost in a year	Which is approximately	Approximate number of lessons missed
95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons

3. Safeguarding and Attendance

Trends and patterns of absence of all pupils will be monitored as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from college when the college cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare².

4. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the 2018 school attendance guidance, from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's 2015 statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- The Education Act 1996 (as amended)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended in 2012 and 2013)

The DfE's guidance on the school census explains the persistent absence threshold. This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association, as an Independent Academy.

² St Bede's Catholic College Safeguarding Policy

Part 2 What the Law Says and Our College Procedures:

1. Contents of Attendance Register

The law makes it clear that schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each day and once during the second session. On each occasion the college must record whether each pupil is:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Attending an approved educational activity; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The college will follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the college's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

2. Present at College (and Lateness)

Pupils are marked present if they are in college when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the college premises after registration they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend college on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

The Attendance Officer / Head of House / Designated Safeguarding Lead will meet with parents of those children who are frequently late arriving at college to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

Our pupils must arrive by 8.45 am on each college day.

Our morning register is taken at 8.45 am and will be kept open until 9.25am

Our afternoon register is taken at 1.15 pm and will be kept open until 1.25pm

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (**L**) – which counts as present.

A pupil who arrives late **after** the registers close will be marked as absent but are then marked present in their lessons. If the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised. If the pupil is late for no good reason they will be marked with the **unauthorised** absence code 'Late after registers close' (**U**). See DfE Attendance Codes – Appendix One.

Effects of Late Arrival at College

When a child arrives late to college, they miss important events like assembly, tutor time, teacher instructions and introductions. Children often also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late. The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others.

Minutes late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons

3. Authorised Absence

'Authorised absence' means that the college has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the college, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the college:

3.1 Illness

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the college's absence reporting procedures will be authorised unless the college has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The college follows the DfE School Attendance Guidance which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the college may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some instances, the college may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP or may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP directly.

If the college is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the college may require medical evidence of some description in order to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the college will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the college by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the college each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the college.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact the college Designated Safeguarding Lead for further information on the support available.

Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Pupils taken ill during the college day

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of college staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the college office by a parent or another authorised adult, and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the college site without parental confirmation.

3.2 Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents should try to make appointments outside of college hours wherever possible. Where appointments during college time are unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of college for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day's schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the college will need an explanation as to why this is.

If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the college day, they must be collected from the college office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the college site without parental confirmation.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it's an emergency appointment, and must be supported by providing the college with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised.

3.3 Traveller Absence

The college will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend college because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The college will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the college know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend college elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this college, which is their 'main' college.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at college and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend college regularly.

3.4 Suspension

If the college decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as a Suspension. The college will follow the current DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions.

Any suspension must be agreed by the Principal.

The college will notify the parent of the suspension. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the college will notify the pupil's carer.

The pupil must be collected from Reception by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the college site without parental confirmation.

4. First Day of Absence Response

If a child is absent and parents have not made contact, the Attendance Officer will contact home to ascertain the whereabouts of the child.

Children in Care; children subject to Child Protection Plans; children open to Social Care as a Child in Need; children who have previously been reported missing; primary aged pupils who make their own way to college will be contacted as a priority.

Parents will be asked to supply details of at least three people who can be contacted in an emergency, and these details will be reviewed on an at least annual basis through parents' evenings/newsletter reminders.

If the college is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided, and is concerned for the welfare of the pupil, we may request a Welfare Check from the police.

5. Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

Good attendance is recognised and celebrated through assemblies, whenever possible.

6. Leave of Absence Requests – ‘Exceptional Circumstances’

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of college during term time. Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. The college will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. Leave of absence will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. The college must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a leave of absence is granted, the college will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from college. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the college's discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend college normally during difficult family times.

Parents should complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the college. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **ten days** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide additional evidence to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage, we will follow the necessary protocols.

7. Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a college is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent without the permission of the Principal. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it is the Principal's decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at college too late to get a mark
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Family day trips
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the college)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from college longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions; usually Penalty Notices or Prosecutions.

8. Approved Educational Activity (AEA)

When pupils are attending educational activities off site that have been approved by the college, the register will be marked to show this is the case. If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, our college

will make arrangements for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (off-site educational activity). The college expects the alternative provider (AP) to notify us of any absences by individual pupils, to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary. Attendance updates will be provided on a weekly basis, or more frequently if agreed with the alternative setting should the need arise. Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the AP.

9. Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in the law and DfE guidance)

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our college will record pupils as 'Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences):

- Our college site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause
- The transport provided by our college or the Local Authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within statutory walking distance. (See the DfE's '[Home to school travel and transport](#)' guidance document.)
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending college.
- The pupil is in custody, but still on the college roll. (If the college has evidence that the pupil is attending educational activities we can record those sessions as 'present at approved educational activity'.)

10. Support for Poor College Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend college. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a college, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with the Attendance Officer or Head of House to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal action plan being produced in the form of an Attendance Contract.

If our college refers a case of poor college attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will at least be evidenced via the sending of a warning letter.

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances we will take a holistic approach to the issue, and involve other agencies as necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the college and/or other agencies, or fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction.

If our college has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

11. Pupils on Part-time Timetables

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

If, for any reason, our college is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any part-time timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupils' return to a full-time timetable.

12. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends college on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the college. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend college regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent, but may have day to day care of the child.

Unauthorised absence from college can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a college, fails to attend regularly at the college his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence. Parents with more than one college aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

The college will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a Penalty Notice to the Local Authority for legal action, unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a Penalty Notice or Prosecution.

Penalty Notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved college attendance. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a pupil's irregular attendance.

A pupil's irregular attendance (which includes unauthorised absence from college) could result in one of the following:

1. A Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60 payable within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. (Failure to pay will result in prosecution.)
2. Prosecution.

Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2500 and /or 3 months' imprisonment. (See link to the DfE's statutory guidance on 'School attendance parental responsibility measures' and Bristol City Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, available here: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/education-welfare>)

Penalty Notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with irregular attendance. For example, in the case of Penalty Notices, if two siblings had irregular college attendance, and there were two parents with responsibility for the children, four Penalty Notices would be issued. Penalty Notices cannot be paid in instalments.

13. Children Missing Education (CME)

Our college will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. The college will follow [Bristol City Council's Children Missing Education guidance](#), and make CME and Pupil Tracking referrals as appropriate. The college will seek advice from the Children Missing Education Officer if unsure about any individual cases: childrenmissingeducation@bristol.gov.uk

14. Following up Unexplained Absences

Where no contact has been made with the college, parents will be contacted by text, email, telephone or letter to try and establish the reason for a child's absence. When we establish the reason for the absence, it will be marked as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within 5 school days, we will mark the absence as unauthorised, using the **O** code. If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s, we may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil's whereabouts.

15. Reporting to Parents

Where a child's attendance drops below 90%, for whatever reason, our college will contact the parents to highlight this, unless there is a good reason not to.

16. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence

Information received via email, telephone or letter regarding a child's absence from college is noted on SIMS.

17. Roles and Responsibilities

The Attendance Officer carries out the college and LEA statutory responsibilities under the 1996 Education Act and subsequent Education, Child Care and Crime and Disorder Acts with regard to college attendance.

With the assistance of the Education Welfare Service, strategies are developed and implemented which contribute towards improving attendance and reducing unauthorised absence at St Bede's.

The Attendance Officer works with St Bede's pupils, their parents and other agencies to resolve attendance difficulties.

Vulnerable groups are identified with SENDCO and Head of House and attendance reports are updated weekly.

The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole college on termly basis. It also holds the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy. The Link Governor for Pastoral care is also informed of any trends in absence and monitors the attendance data on a regular basis through governing body meetings and oversight meetings.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

Assistant Head with Responsibility for Attendance

The Assistant Principal with responsibility for attendance oversees the work of the Attendance Officer and interrogates attendance by group, such as pupils entitled to Free School Meals, Pupil Premium pupil, pupils with SEND, Children in Care, attendance by Ethnicity and Language (English/EAL).

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) and will:

- Provide advice and support to the Attendance Officer (and other staff) on child welfare and child protection matters
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and to support other staff to do so
- Contribute to the assessment of children.

Attendance Officer and Learning Mentor

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as appropriate
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Co-ordinates requests for absence requests and advises the Principal as requested

Heads of House

- Ensure punctuality and attendance are checked and responded to.

Class Teachers/Form Tutors

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Tutors also monitor those with attendance of 85%-93% (this data is provided by the Attendance Officer)

Office Staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and pass the information to the Attendance Officer to be recorded on the SIMS.

18. Policy Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal, or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

19. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Discipline Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Anti Bullying Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

Appendix 1 – Department for Education (DfE) Attendance Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. present at another school or PRU)	Not counted in possible attendances
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience (not work based training)	Approved Education Activity
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age pupils / Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Where the school site, or part of it, is closed due to unavoidable cause; or the transport provided by the school or local authority for pupils (who do not live with walking distance) is not available; or where a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school; or a pupil is detained in custody for less than four months.	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Covid-19 – Interim Attendance Guidance

Addendum to the Attendance Policy for Academic Year 2021-2022

This document has been developed to reflect amended regulations to enable schools, in the 2021 to 2022 academic year, to continue to record where a pupil does not attend in circumstances relating to COVID-19.

Background

This addendum has been produced in line with Department of Education (DfE) guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2021-to-2022-academic-year>

It replaces the previous addendum guidance documents on recording attendance during the COVID-19 outbreak.

This Addendum outlines:

- Attendance expectations
- Attendance coding and not attending in circumstances relating to COVID -19
- Examples in which 'not attending in circumstances relating to COVID-19' could apply
- Remote Learning

The addendum should also be read in line with DfE guidance [School Attendance: main guidance - July 2021](#) and St. Bede's Catholic College's Attendance Policy. It should also be read in conjunction with the wider guidance document which gives advice on other usual attendance duties and processes that remain in force.

Attendance Expectations

Pupil attendance is mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct. Penalty notices should only be considered when all other options to improve attendance have been exhausted

Attendance Coding and Not Attending in Circumstances relating to COVID-19

Although school attendance is mandatory, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

A category of non-attendance – 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' continues and must only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2021 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19 from Public Health England (PHE), or its successor UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19

This category must only be used to record where a pupil is not attending for the reasons set out above. It should not be used to record any other type of non-attendance or absence - for example, where a parent or pupil is anxious about attending school because of COVID-19

In line with the Secretary of State's expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

St. Bede's Catholic College will be using the attendance and absence codes in use before the outbreak (See Appendix A) in addition to the new category of 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' as detailed below:

- pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' should be recorded using code X

Circumstances for non-attendance related to COVID-19 during academic year 2021-22 **Examples in which 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)'**

St. Bede's Catholic College will follow the procedures detailed below when pupils who are required to self-isolate as they have symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19):

- Pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19 or have had a positive lateral flow device (LFD) test, should self-isolate and get a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test.
- If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school/their setting
- If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I – illness, as would usually be the case.
- Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result.
- If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate in line with public health guidance
- Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

St. Bede's Catholic College will follow the procedures detailed below when someone in the pupil's household has symptoms:

- The household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.
- If the member of the household tests negative, the pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school. Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result when the pupil can return to school.
- If the household member tests positive, the pupil should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms. Code X should be used during this period.
- In all cases of self-isolation, St Bede's Catholic College will ask parents to inform them immediately about the outcome of a test. However, evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence will not be requested before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

To support decision making reference should be made to relevant government guidance.

Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

Pupils who are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to self-isolate. They should instead get a PCR test and should only self-isolate if they test positive. If they do test positive, they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to St. Bede's Catholic College.

Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine

- Parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time.
- Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine.
- If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, code X should be used in the register.

To support decision making reference should be made to the relevant government guidance.

Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable when shielding is advised

- Clinically extremely vulnerable people are no longer advised to shield.
- All clinically extremely vulnerable pupils should attend their education setting unless they are one of the very small number of children and young people under paediatric or other specialist care who have been advised by their clinician or other specialist not to attend.
- If shielding is advised nationally or in a local area again, by DHSC, PHE or UKHSA, then pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable may be advised not to attend school.
- Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from DHSC, PHE or UKHSA should be recorded as code X.

To support decision making reference should be made to the relevant government guidance.

Pupils who are self-isolating but who have not had a PCR test

In line with public health advice, pupils with symptoms must self-isolate and should be strongly encouraged to take a PCR test. Where the pupil is unable to take a PCR test, the pupil will be recorded using a code X in the register.

St. Bede's Catholic College will follow up with families if not satisfied with the reason as to why the pupil is not in school/setting. Schools/settings can request supporting evidence from the family. Where St. Bede's Catholic College is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, this may be recorded using one of the unauthorised absence codes, in line with the [school attendance: guidance for schools](#).

Remote Education

- If a pupil is not attending St. Bede's Catholic College due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), St. Bede's Catholic College will offer them access to remote education (this may be online or via other means). St. Bede's Catholic College will keep a record of, and monitor engagement with this activity, however this will not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

Appendix A

Contents of Attendance Register in line with Department for Education Guidance

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent;
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances; or,
- Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)¹¹

The school should follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,

- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

Absence and Attendance Codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The codes are:

Present at School

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

Updated Sept 2021